

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

## Media Briefing

AI Index: ACT 30/028/2005 (Public)  
News Service No: 333  
7 December 2005

### **Make Some Noise: Interviews with Robert Smith (The Cure), Peter Gabriel and Snow Patrol**

**Excerpts from interview with Robert Smith of The Cure**, recorded at Westside Studios, London, UK on 13 May 2005

"You're constantly told through the media that young people are apathetic. They're absolutely not; there's never been a time in history when young people were apathetic -- they're the most outrageously energetic people on the planet, but they just need to be involved in things that entice them and excite them. Being involved in Amnesty, over the last couple of years particularly, we've noticed how, once people are introduced to what Amnesty is and the concepts behind it, they're enthralled by it -- and this whole thing about 'No one can be bothered to vote... no one can be bothered to do that... if I do it, what difference will it make?' is rubbish. One person is all it takes to make a difference."

"In everyone's life, there's a question of making your life your own, of doing something really positive with it and I know it sounds really weird from a band like The Cure, but, in fact, what we've done down the years is exactly that -- we've done exactly what we've wanted to do and we've done it in such a way as to give other people pleasure and that's the essence of living a good life and that's the core of what Amnesty's all about."

"I support Amnesty because it's not really an option, the way the world is going. I think the time is more than right for Amnesty to become a genuinely global force. It's there and many people are just becoming aware of what Amnesty is and what it does. More people need to join and get involved and to make it into a much, much bigger voice. There are millions of people involved but there should be billions of people involved. It is the most important thing. Human rights are above everything else. Without human rights, life isn't worth living."

**Excerpts from interview with Peter Gabriel**, recorded at Real World Studios on 15 June 2005

"John Lennon was definitely one of my heroes. I think he always wrote from his heart. He was a very complicated individual, but there's an honesty about his song-writing that I think makes it very powerful. Sometimes it's very simplistic, childlike and naïve; and that is what gives it some of its strength."

"I got enlisted in the human rights thing when Bono called me up and asked me to get involved in the Conspiracy of Hope tour in 1986 and then I did his collecting of artists job for the Human Rights Now tour in 1988 and suddenly you were meeting people who had been tortured, you were meeting people who had watched their families shot in front of them, and human rights were no longer something I was reading about and it was real education for me. When you meet people face to face, it's very hard, when you get asked to help, to then walk away."

"Sadly, all over the world in every country, there are still human rights abuses. If you look at what most of the

countries signed onto when they signed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and what actually happens day-to-day in those countries, there are still horrendous abuses and I think that there is an awful lot still to be done."

"I think that anyone who doesn't have some sense of idealism when they're young is really missing out a bit of their humanity, because you have the chance to go into the world and feel, quite rightly, that it is soon going to be yours and you can change it. I think that's what my generation did with the Beatles at the front of it. There is so much more that needs to be done and if people let go of the rope, then it slides back very easily. So I think:

get involved with a cause -- doesn't matter which one -- because it will lead you to things you will really care about, and  
travel -- go to places that you didn't ever think that you should or would want to visit and just meet the people and find out who lives there, what sort of experiences they have and what sort of culture they have.

Those types of exchanges that go on again, transform lives, and that's the opportunity you have now -- to change your life in a way that plugs you into different people around the world."

"Working with the tours and meeting all the people that felt their lives had literally been saved by Amnesty made it seem like such a simple, elegant and powerful idea. I think that it is a wonderful organisation that really deserves a lot of support."

**Excerpts from Interview with Snow Patrol (Jonny Quinn and Gary Lightbody)** recorded at Grouse Lodge, West Meath, Ireland, on 17 November, 2005

**Gary:** "I support Amnesty because we have lived our whole lives in freedom -- freedom of thought, freedom of action, we've always had a roof over our heads and food on the table and generally our lives have been a cakewalk compared to quite a lot of kids and adults around the world. The Western world has it very, very easy in comparison to the poverty and the exploitation and the oppression that is happening in many countries."

**Jonny:** "When I first heard about human rights, it was through U2 when I was about 16. I think it was a fan club that had a whole piece about Amnesty. There must have been a whole generation of people that got into it through that and I wouldn't have known about it any other way. Amnesty is regardless of politics or religion or anything like that and it's just helping people whose basic human rights are being denied and it's nothing really to do with any other kind of issue -- it's just helping people who can't help themselves."

**Gary:** "There are children in the world that aren't educated, don't have any rights at all and you're going to school, you've got a roof over your head, you're wired up to the internet, you can read whatever books you want and you can listen to whatever music you want. Some kids in the world don't have any of that and they're forced into certain situations in their life that means they have very little to look forward to. It shocks everyone, but the younger that it shocks you, the more likely you are to get involved in a positive way. So, hopefully, things like this project ease people in. Music is a very good way of bringing awareness to people without feeling like it's ramming it down their throats."

**Jonny:** "My mum was really into the Beatles and I remember her telling stories about them. But I didn't really like it that much. It was the '80s and I remember just hating the Beatles and then, years later, coming to my mum saying, 'They actually really good, they're a brilliant band'. So I kind of came to love them afterwards."

"I don't believe you should do covers exactly the same as they are because there is no point in competing -- usually you'll never better it. It's good to put your own stamp on it."

**Gary:** "It's funny that it's come almost full circle. Bands kind of lionise the Beatles again and now pop music is still played to their template. When I became a Beatles fan, '63 to '70 was the stuff I liked the most. I didn't

really know much about solo projects, in fact, the solo project I probably knew the most about was George Harrison's, *All Things Must Pass*, which Jonny introduced me to. The Lennon stuff, I obviously knew, like *Woman*, but I didn't know lots and lots."

"We listened to quite a few songs and *Isolation* kind of struck me as very pertinent for the times in which we live, especially for the Amnesty project, and we really wanted to disassemble it and put it back together in a very strange way. I'm told it was at a time that John Lennon was doing his primal scream therapy and was really expressing his anger in a very specifically violent and aggressive way in his music, so we wanted to strip it back and make it something quite sinister and beautiful at the same time to see if that would work."

#### Public Document

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